Essentialism

From Encyclopaedia Chelouranya

The Herthelan philosophy in its broadest sense is defined as Feminine Essentialism. Chelouranyi classify all thought as either *Essentialist* or *substantialist*. The term *Essentialism* in Chelouranya is used in a special sense that must be distinguished from other Tellurian uses of the word, although it is close to the traditional Tellurian philosophical definition.

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Essentialism and Substantialism in *The Feminine Universe*

We call traditional thought *Essentialist*, because it is, by definition, that intellectuality which recognizes the universal Pole of Essence and (which is in fact the same thing) recognizes that all existing entities, from an ant to a galaxy, are what they are precisely because of their Essential forms or Archetypes.

The late-patriarchal ideology, which we may call *substantialist*, or accidentalist, in contradistinction to Essentialist, consists precisely and wholly in a denial of the Pole of Essence and of the Essences of entities. Everything else the modern world believes flows from this denial. The whole project of late-patriarchal thought is to explain the universe wholly in terms of matter or substance and to deny Form or Essence.

At first these concepts may seem difficult. That is hardly surprising, since we are discussing things that lie completely outside the thinking of the modern world. Nevertheless, the Essentialist way of thought has been the underlying model for all human conceptualization from the Golden Age right through to the so-called Enlightenment of the seventeenth century, and Essentialism was only fully eradicated from the normal thinking of most educated people toward the end of the nineteenth century.

In truth, there are only, and can only be, two ways of thinking: the Essentialist and the substantialist. All the different philosophies, ideologies and outlooks of the modern world, from Marxism to the New Age movement to the 'ordinary common sense outlook' of most people who believe they have no philosophy at all, are simply variations on the underlying theme of substantialism.

Universality of Essentialism

While Essentialism, in the sense closest to the Herthelan, is generally defined (as in "Classic Essentialism", below) in terms of Athenian philosophy, it is common to every traditional people, from the traditional Chinese and Indian philosophies, to the beliefs of shamanistic and tribal peoples, to the everyday assumptions of ordinary people throughout the world before the substantialist revolution of the late 19th century.

It is an inherent part of all human thought that the *forms* (or Essences) of things are eternal and supra-material, while their incarnation in earthly substance is temporary and changeable. Only in the late 19th century, particularly in the wake of the popularization of transformist evolutionism, which appears to dispose of the question of form in living beings by suggesting that they came "from nearly nothing" by a series of "accidents", did any large number of people begin to see the universe in non-Essentialist terms.

We now know that single-celled creatures are far from "nearly nothing" and contain huge amounts of information (essence) within their DNA, and that the attempt to reduce Essence to a by-product of substance by the theory of natural selection is actually a sleight-of-hand which merely pushes the question of form (or Essence) backward without actually answering it (just as the "Big Bang" theory pushes back the related question of Existence without actually answering it—if there was a bang, there must have been something to go bang: therefore the bang was not truly the "beginning").

Herthelan philosophy teaches that all manifest things are a marriage of Essence and substance. Pure Essence and pure substance are necessarily unmanifest. Pure substance has no qualities (or Essence)—neither hardness nor softness, warmth not coldness, no color, no shape, no flavor. Therefore it cannot be seen, touched, heard, tasted, or smelled. It is not in "the realm of things palpable". Conversely pure Essence is pure form without the substantial support needed for it to be incarnate in matter.

Historical Decline from Essence to Substance

Nonetheless, the Pole of Essence and the Pole of substance are the two extreme points of the manifest world, although neither can actually be manifest. In the earliest times—the Golden Age—the world was nearest to the Essential Pole and the Historical Cycle is a process of continuous consolidation or substantialization. The Age of Iron (Kali Yuga), therefore, approaches as close to the Pole of Substance as humanity and the manifest world can come.

In Telluria substance is associated with the masculine principle and Essence with the feminine principle, so the progression toward substantiality is naturally associated in the human realm with the birth and growth of patriarchy and eventually with the doctrine of substantialism.

Traditionalist philosophers, and non-Westernized/modernized followers of many Tellurian traditions are also Essentialist (though they may not use the term). Thus Chelouranyani distinguish their philosophy as Feminine Essentialism.

Because the Motherland is intemorphic, having no sex that is inherently associated with the principle of substance, the phenomenon of substantialism has never existed in Sai Herthe. The Rajasic period in the Herthelan West has in practice given rise to a culture based on a much more this-worldly orientation that that of the traditional Sattwic societies of the East and the earlier West, but this has never had an accompanying doctrinal justification. On the contrary, modern Westrennes acknowledge the Sattwic, upward orientation of society to be the better way, while also believing that the Rajasic, outward orientation to be that favored by the current condition of the World-Cycle. Most Estrennes also acknowledge this latter point and agree that "the time of Abolraihir (literally 'Apple-Empire', meaning the Westrenne Empire) has come".

Thus, rather than a clash between the traditional Essentialist outlook and a substantialist ideology, there is in Sai Herthe an agreement on fundamental principle.

Classical Essentialism, as defined in Wikipedia

The definition, in philosophical contexts, of the word "essence" is very close to the definition of form (Greek *eidos*). Many definitions of essence harken back to the ancient Greek hylomorphic understanding of the formation of the things of this world. According to that account, the structure and real existence of any thing can be understood by analogy to an artifact produced by a craftsman. The craftsman requires *hyle* (timber or wood) and a model or plan or idea in his own mind according to which the wood is worked to give it the indicated contour or form (*morphe*). Aristotle was the first to use the terms *hyle* and *morphe*. According to his explanation, all entities have two aspects, "matter" and "form." It is the particular form imposed that gives some matter its identity, its quiddity or "whatness" (i.e., its "what it is").

Plato was an essentialist since he believed in ideal forms of which every object is just a poor copy. Ideas are eternal. Ideas are superior to material objects. When we see objects in the material world, we understand them through the relationships between them. This belief is clearly manifested in his famous parable of the cave.

Essentialism and Particle Physics, from *The Feminine Universe*

It is interesting to note, in this context, the findings of scientists who have attempted to probe the inner nature of matter. The more we learn about sub-atomic particles, the more they seem to defy all normal physical description. They seem at times to behave like particles and at other times to behave like waves. They do things which would normally be called physical impossibilities, and at times the very laws of cause and effect appear to be inverted, with an event that is caused happening before the event that causes it. Scientists are compelled to surmise that these are not physical entities at all in any sense of the term that means anything to us. What they seem to be, we are told, is "pieces of pure information".

Now this is patently absurd. How can information exist on its own with nothing to inform? —and remember, there *is* nothing for these sub-atomic particles to inform, because they are supposed to constitute everything that is. According to the only view acceptable to a purely-material science, every existing thing must be built up from them and nothing else. Scientists themselves admit the logical impossibility of the thing—the fact that the whole mechanistic, materialistic system of modern science turns out to be based upon an absurdity. The very laws of cause and effect upon which science is based fall to pieces as we reach the foundations of matter itself.

Nevertheless, this description makes perfect sense in the light of primordial science. Essence is precisely pure information. It informs—forms from within—every material entity. Essence is Form—or in-form-ation—working on substance, and substance can only be seen when the light of Essence is shining on it; we can only perceive marble, for example because of its qualities: its hardness, color, weight, stone-ness.

At the sub-atomic level we cannot detect the substance upon which Essence is working. This is because there is some truth in the scientist's belief that he is "getting to the very building blocks of matter itself", and while he is not, and could not be, at the level of pure substance or Prima Materia, he is seeing matter stripped of many of its Essential qualities. Consequently, at this level, matter is no longer prehensible, and all that can be seen is the low-level action of Essence, which appears to be acting on its own as "pure information", but is in fact in-forming substance at a very rudimentary level.

There is an irony—but in fact it is something more than a mere accidental irony—in the fact that modern science, which bases itself exclusively upon a purely material and quantitative approach and upon the assumption that everything can be explained from the side of matter, ignoring Essence altogether, should, upon approaching what ought to be, as it were, its own domain *par excellence*—the nearest we can get in manifestation to "pure matter"—run headlong into the problem of Essence and see its material and quantitative axioms go up in smoke.

It is also important for us to realize from the outset that when we speak of Essence and substance as the fundamental principles of cosmic manifestation, we are not talking merely of philosophical abstractions or ancient notions that have been superseded by modern science; we are speaking of vital truths which have always been true, and which, while they may have seemed to be rendered obsolete in the comfortable, closed world of eighteenth and nineteenth-century mechanistic materialism, the findings of twentieth-century atomic and astro-physics reveal them to be absolutely necessary to an adequate and coherent explanation of being.

For a much fuller exposition of this science, see chapter 5 of The Feminine Universe *by Alice Lucy Trent*.

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